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Statistical implications of the follow-up to recent major United Nations conferences

Note by the Secretary-General

1. At its twenty-ninth session, the Statistical Commission endorsed the minimum national social data set (MNSDS), as recommended by its Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination, with the substitution of the indicator "Contraceptive prevalence rate" in place of the indicator "Percentage of infants weighing less than 2,500 g at birth, by sex".

2. The United Nations Statistics Division is undertaking work to implement MNSDS through the following activities:

(a) Letters were sent to countries and to United Nations bodies and other international organizations, informing them of MNSDS and its use in responding to the needs highlighted in the global conferences to collect and present more and better data describing progress for individual countries;

(b) MNSDS is being prepared on a trial basis for dissemination on the Statistics Division home page maintained on the United Nations Headquarters World Wide Web site. The data set will use only data reported by countries, with no projections or synthetic data;

(c) The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is using MNSDS as a suggested framework for the sociodemographic portion of its proposed general data dissemination system. The United Nations Statistics Division participated in a country analysis mission in Sri Lanka in 1997 to assess the quality, adequacy and timeliness of disseminated data related to MNSDS.

3. The Statistics Division will prepare a report on the implementation and use of MNSDS for the thirtieth session of the Statistical Commission, pursuant to the conclusions of the twenty-ninth session of the Commission. The report will be based on the trial compilation of MNSDS, using only data reported by countries. It will indicate the series that are complete at the international level, and will provide information on the series that have not been collected at the international level, the number of countries and the timeliness of data for the series that have been collected, and the lessons learned in compiling those data.

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International economic and social classifications

Note by the Secretary-General

1. At its twenty-ninth session, the Statistical Commission took four actions of concern to the Working Group in the area of international economic and social classifications. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the development of a module on basic principles for the development and use of international classifications, for inclusion in the Common Code of Best Practices in the United Nations System, and asked that the module be reviewed at the third meeting of the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications;

(b) Recommended that the revised Central Product Classification (CPC) be published as Central Product Classification Version 1.0, on the understanding that users would be alerted in the preface to the plans for its further improvement;

(c) Encouraged member States to start implementing CPC Version 1.0 and to make suggestions to the Secretariat for its further improvement;

(d) Recognized the need to continue to consult the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics so as to utilize its technical expertise for future revisions of CPC.

2. Accordingly, the following actions have been taken by the United Nations Statistics Division:

(a) The United Nations Statistics Division is currently drafting a module on basic principles for the development and use of international classifications for review at the third meeting of the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications, to be held from 1 to 3 December 1997 in New York, and has also asked for contributions to the third Expert Group meeting on this subject from selected international organizations and countries;

(b) The Statistics Division, in collaboration with the Central Product Classification Subgroup of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics, is also preparing Central Product Classification Version 1.0 for publication in 1998;

(c) The Statistics Division is encouraging member States and international organizations to start implementing CPC Version 1.0 and to make suggestions to the Secretariat for its further improvement, through its correspondence with countries, presentations made at numerous meetings, and the preparation of standardized procedures for recording and reviewing such suggestions in the Division's International Classifications Database;

(d) The work of the Statistical Division on the development and use of CPC is facilitated through advisory activities carried out by the CPC Subgroup of the Voorburg Group, where discussion on the implementation and further

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97-30912 (E) 181297 191297

improvement of CPC also continues. All decisions of the CPC Subgroup are documented in the Division's International Classifications Database, for use in the interpretation and further development of CPC. There has been particularly close cooperation between the United Nations Statistics Division, the CPC Subgroup of the Voorburg Group and the World Trade Organization (WTO) secretariat in analysing details of the revision of the CPC nomenclature. CPC serves as a basis for the services commitments undertaken by members of WTO.

3. In addition, the Working Group may wish to note that the *Classifications Hot Line Newsletter* established by the United Nations Statistics Division is now available on the World Wide Web, at the following address:

www.un.org/Depts/unsd/class/class1.htm

Points for discussion

4. The Working Group may wish to comment on the actions that have been taken to implement and further improve CPC.